The Sealing of the Spirit

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"In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13,14.

I HAVE taken the whole passage for the sake of completing the sense, but I have no intention whatever of preaching upon all of it. Practically I only need for the topic of this morning the following words—"In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." The sealing of the Holy Spirit will be the subject of our meditation. There are many who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ who are extremely anxious to obtain some token for good, some witness from God which shall render them quite sure that they are saved. They have not yet reached the full assurance of faith and they feel uneasy till they attain it. They feel that these matters are too important to be left at all uncertain and they, therefore, pine for some sure witness or seal.

Men will not risk their estates and no spiritually sensible man will endure to have his soul and its eternal affairs in jeopardy for an hour—therefore this anxiety. It is true that by the way of faith only the fullest and best assurance may be reached, but many who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are not yet aware of this and their trembling hearts crave for a testimonial from the Infallible God to certify them that they are, indeed, saved. Yes, and I conceive that even more advanced saints, who know more fully where their standing is and confess that they can only walk by faith, yet often sing with very great emphasis of desire—

"Might I but hear Your hea venly tongue
But whisper, 'You are Mine,'
That cheerful word should raise my song
To notes almost Divine."

Though we can and do believe and can claim the privilege which belongs to those who have not seen and yet have believed, yet we would be glad to sometimes have a sight. We sometimes wish we could know by sure mark and evidence and token that our experience, after all, is a reality, and that we are, indeed, born of God—

"O tell me that my worthless name
Is engraved on Your hands!
Show me some promise in Your Book

Where my salvation stands!"

Now, in the best sense, this seal which we seek after is to be had! No, it is manifestly seen by many of God's children. It does not supersede faith, but it rewards and strengthens it. There is a way by which God speaks to His own and assures them that they are His. There is a pledge and an earnest—and this is freely given to the people of God. May God's own Spirit enable me to speak aright upon this weighty subject. The text says, "After that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." And, therefore, first, I shall call your attention to the position of this sealing. Secondly, to the benefits which arise out of it. And thirdly, to the sealing itself, which, indeed, I shall endeavor to explain thoroughly.

I. First, let us speak of THE POSITION OF THIS SEALING. We are desirous to get some confirming seal from God set upon our souls, some sure token that we are, indeed, His own people. That sealing we can have. God bestows it. But let us notice very carefully, lest we make a mistake, when that sealing comes. It does not come before believing. According to the text it is, "after that you believed, you were sealed." Now, there are hundreds of persons who are craving

for something to see or to feel before they will believe in Jesus Christ. This is wickedness and the result of an unbelief which is most offensive in the sight of God.

If you demand a token before you believe, you practically say that you cannot take God's bare Word for your comfort, that the sure Word of Testimony recorded in the Bible is not enough for you, that the solemn declaration of God may, after all, be false. At any rate, that you find it impossible to rest your confidence upon that, alone, and must see something else. If not a miracle, perhaps you demand a dream, or a strange feeling, or a mysterious operation. At any rate, if you do not see some sign and wonder, you declare that you will not believe. You do, in fact, say to God, "If You will not go out of Your way to give me what I ask, and to do for me what I demand, then I will call You a liar to Your face by refusing to believe You."

Ah, my Hearer, this will not do! This is to provoke the Lord to jealousy and he that does this shall receive no token, whatever, except it be the sign of the unbelievers of Chorazin, for whom the Day of Judgment shall be more intolerable than for Sodom and Gomorrah. Note, also, that this sealing does not necessarily come at once with faith. It grows out of faith and comes, "after that you believed." We are not, in every case, sealed at the moment when we first trust in Jesus. I am persuaded that many who believe in Jesus enter into peace, directly, and perceive at once the blessed assurance which is involved in their possessing the Holy Spirit. But with many others it is not so.

I have frequently been asked this question, "What is a person to do who believes in Jesus, but yet is not conscious of peace and joy, but is filled with such a conflict within that the utmost he can do is to cling to Jesus with trembling hope?"

1 have replied, "If you believe in Jesus Christ you are saved. The best evidence that you are saved lies in the assurance of the Word of God that every Believer has eternal hope." Whether you feel that you are justified, or not, is not the point. You are to accept God's Word which assures you that everyone that believes is justified. You are bound to believe the Testimony of God apart from the supporting evidence of inward experience. And if it were possible for you to be a Believer by the year together and yet find no peace, still you would have no right to doubt what God says because you do not feel peace—you are bound to hold on to God's promise whether you enjoy peace or not.

My firm belief is that where there is a real faith in the promise of God, peace and the other fruits of the Spirit come as a necessary ultimate consequence, but even then they are not grounds of faith—the Word of the Lord is the sole foundation upon which faith builds. Some people have a sort of confidence in God, but they are also looking out for confirming signs and they spoil the simplicity of their faith by having one eye on Christ and another eye on their peace of mind. Now, my Friend, this will never do. You are bound to believe in God as He is revealed in Christ Jesus unto salvation, altogether apart from peace, joy, or anything else.

The witness of the Spirit within is not the ground nor the cause of our faith—faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. I, being a sinner, believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and I rest my soul upon Him, believing that He will save me. This is to be my standing, seal or no seal, token or no token. My dependence is not to be upon the seal of the Spirit, but upon the blood of the Son! The Spirit of God never takes the place of the Redeemer. He exercises His own peculiar office, which is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us and not to put His own things in the place of Jesus. The foundation of our hope is laid in Christ from first to last and if we rest there we are saved.

The seal does not always come with faith, but it follows after. I have said this because I am afraid lest in any way whatever you should leave the simple, plain and solid ground of confidence in the finished work of Jesus Christ and in that only. Remember that a man who believes in Jesus Christ is as truly saved when he does not know it as he is when he does know it—he is as truly the Lord's when he mourns in the valley of humiliation as when he sings on the mountaintop of joy and fellowship! Our ground of trust is not to be found in our experience, but in the Person and work of our Lord Jesus—

"I dare not trust the sweetest frame But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand."

Note, also, as to the position of this sealing, that, while it is not the first, it is not the last thing in the Divine life. It comes after believing, but when you obtain it, there is something yet to follow. Perhaps you have had the notion that if you could once be told from the mouth of God, Himself, that you were saved, you would then lie down and cease from

life's struggle. It is clear, therefore, that such an assurance should be an evil thing for you, for a Christian is never more out of place than when he dreams that he has ceased from conflict. The natural, fit and proper position for a soldier of Jesus Christ is to be at war with sin. We are wrestlers and our normal condition is that of "striving according to His working who works in us mightily." This side of Heaven, if there is a place for nest-building and ease-taking it is not the place for you—you are a pilgrim—and a pilgrim's business is to be on the road, pressing forward to the home beyond.

Remember, if there are seats of ease, and no doubt there are, they are not for you since you are a runner in a great race, with Heaven and earth for witnesses. Cessation from watchfulness means ruin to your soul. The closing of conflict would show that you could never gain the victory! Perfect rest on earth would show that none remained for you in Heaven. Even if the Spirit of God seals you, what will it amount to? To the inheritance itself, so that you can say, "I have attained perfection"? Certainly not! To Brethren, the Scripture says, "Which is the earnest of our inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession." This side of Heaven all you can obtain is an earnest of the perfection of which Heaven is made up—

"There rest shall follow toil, And ease succeed to care: The victors there divide the spoil; They sing and triumph there."

Here we must labor, watch, run, fight, wrestle, agonize! All our forces, strengthened by the Eternal Spirit, must be expended in this high enterprise, striving to enter in at the strait gate. When we have obtained the sealing, our warfare is not ended, we have only, then, received a foretaste of the victory for which we must still fight on. This is the true position of the sealing. It stands between the Grace which enables us to believe and the Glory which is our promised inheritance.

II. We will notice, secondly, what are THE BENEFITS OF THIS SEALING and while we are doing so, we shall be compelled to state what we think that sealing is, though that is to be the subject of the third head. The sealing spoken of in the text does not make the promises of God to be true. Please notice that. This text has been preached upon as though it stated that the Spirit of God set His seal upon the Gospel and the promises of God. Well, dear Friends, it is true that the Spirit of God witnesses to the Truth of God and to the sureness of the promises. But that is evidently not intended here, for the text says not that the promises were sealed, but that, "you were sealed."

YOU are the writing which has the stamp put upon it! YOU, yourselves, are sealed! It is not even stated that the Spirit of God seals up Covenant blessings as gold is sealed up in a bag and reserves them for the chosen Seed. The text tells us that Believers, themselves, are thus reserved and marked as the Lord's peculiar treasure—and it is upon Believers, themselves, that this seal of the Holy Spirit is set. No, Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit does not make the promises sure—they are sure of themselves! God, who cannot lie, has uttered

them, and therefore they cannot fail. Nor, my Brethren, does the Holy Spirit make sure our interest in those promises—that interest in the promises was sure in the Divine decree, before the earth was, and is a matter of fact which cannot be changed.

The promises are already sure to all the Seed. The Holy Spirit makes us sure that the Word is true and that we are concerned in it, but the promise was sure beforehand and our interest in that promise was sure, too, from the moment in which it was bestowed upon us by the sovereign act of God. To understand our text, you must notice that it is bounded by two words, "In whom," which two words are twice given in this verse. "In whom also after that you believed, you were sealed." What is meant by, "In whom"? The words signify "In Christ." It is in Christ that the people of God are sealed! We must, therefore, understand this sealing as it would relate to Christ, since so far, and so far only, can it relate to us.

Was our Lord sealed? Turn to John 6:27 and there you have this exhortation—"Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him has God the Father sealed." There is the clue to our text. "Him has God the Father sealed." For since our sealing is in Him, it must be the same sealing. Notice, then, first, that the ever-blessed Son was sealed on the Father's part by God's giving a testimony to Him that He was, indeed, His own Son and the Sent One of the Lord. As when a king issues a proclamation, He sets His seal to it to say, "This is mine," so when the Father sent His Son into the world, He gave Him this testimony, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He said this in words, but how did He give a perpetual testimony by a seal, which should be with Him throughout life? It was by anointing Him with the Holy Spirit. The seal that Jesus was the Messiah was that the Spirit of God rested

upon Him without measure. Hence we read expressions like these—"He was justified in the Spirit." "He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." "It is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth." Now, the Spirit of God, whenever it abides upon a man, is the mark that that man is accepted of God. We say not that where the Spirit merely strives at intervals, there is any seal of Divine favor, but where He abides it is assuredly so. The very fact that we possess the Spirit of God is God's testimony and seal in us that we are His and that as He has sent His Son into the world, even so does He send us into the world.

Secondly, to our Lord Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit was a seal for His own encouragement. Our Lord condescended to restrain the power of His Godhead, and, as a Servant, He depended upon the Father for support. When He began His ministry, He encouraged Himself thus—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted." He found His stimulus of service, He found the authorization of His service, He found His comfort and strength for service in the fact that God had given Him the Holy Spirit. This was His joy!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we need to be encouraged for holy service by feeling quite sure that we are saved, where must we get that encouragement? Read in the First Epistle of John, the third chapter and 24th verse where the seal of God is described—"Hereby we know that He abides in us by the Spirit which He has given us." Read also in the fourth chapter, verse 13, "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, because He has given us of His Spirit." So that as the seal which comforted our Lord and made Him to know, in times of depression, that He was, indeed, beloved of the Father, was that He had the Spirit of God! So to you and to me, Brothers and Sisters, the possession of the Spirit of God is our continuous encouragement, for by this we may know beyond all question that we dwell in God and God dwells in us.

The seal answers a two-fold purpose. It is on God's part, a testimony, and to us an encouragement. But the seal is meant to be an evidence to others. The Father set His seal upon His Son in order that others might discern that He was, indeed, sent of God. John says, "I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:33).

The Spirit, then, was, upon our Lord, the seal for recognition. And, Beloved, so must it be with us. We cannot be known by our fellow Christians except by the possession of the Spirit of God. Have you ever noticed how Peter claimed for the uncircumcised the rights of Church membership in the 15th of Acts in the eighth and ninth verses? He says, "God, which knows the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." So that to Peter, the possession of the Holy Spirit was the broad seal of Heaven which the Lord never sets upon a heart wherein there is no faith. The same argument had been felt in all its power by Peter when he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"

Paul used this as his test concerning the sons of men, for in Romans 8:9, he says, "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if, indeed, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," plainly indicating that the absence of the Spirit is fatal, for the Divine signature is not at the bottom of the document. But if the Spirit of God is there, then all is right, for the Lord never puts His seal to anything which is not sound and true. Rest quite sure that where the Spirit of God abides, there the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been written on the heart and the man is saved.

Further, the fourth effect of the seal upon Christ was that it was to the world a witness. The Spirit of God upon Jesus Christ was not recognized by the ungodly world to be, indeed, Divine, but they perceived and were astonished at a something about Him which they did not understand. He spoke with authority and not as the scribes and they confessed, "Never

man spoke like this Man." They did not know what spirit He was of, but they knew they hated it and straightway they began to oppose Him. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if you have the same seal as your Lord which is described in the text as, "the Spirit of promise," the same result will follow! Men will wonder at you, misunderstand you and oppose you!

And what is the reason? Never in this world did the Spirit of promise appear without opposition from the spirit of bondage. Isaac was the child of promise and did not Ishmael, who was born after the flesh, persecute him? The two seeds of the flesh and of the promise are at daggers drawn with each other! When the Lord sets His seal upon you by giving you the Spirit of promise, so that you are not under the Law but under Christ, the world will know it. They will not admire you, but they will strive against you to destroy you.

Once more, the seal upon our Lord Jesus Christ was intended for a fifth reason, namely—for His perseverance even to the end. A seal is set upon a treasure which we mean to preserve and so was the precious Redeemer sealed. Now, you will say to me, "But dare we speak of Jesus Christ as being preserved by the Spirit of God?" My dear Brethren, we must never forget the wonderful self-denial of Christ in that He laid aside His own Divine power. And while He was in this world He said the Father was greater than He. And He became a Man so as to pray and to believe, and to depend upon the Father. Jesus Christ put Himself into such a condition while He was here that He relied upon the Spirit of God to uphold Him. Do you doubt it?

Turn to the 42nd Chapter of Isaiah, verse one, and there you get it in express words: "Behold My Servant whom I uphold!" See how He puts Himself, as a Servant, to be upheld by the Lord. "My elect, in whom My Soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles: He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth." There can be no doubt that this is Christ for these very words are quoted concerning Himself.

Now, what comes of the upholding of the blessed Spirit? "He shall not fail nor be discouraged until He has set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His Law." So that the Spirit of God upheld Christ, sustained Him and kept Him till His life's work was finished, without His failing or being discouraged. My Brothers and Sisters, this is how you and I must be kept! This is the seal which we need, which shall preserve us as the consecrated ones of God, so that when He comes, He shall find us under seal and not discouraged.

Let me now recapitulate. Upon our Lord Jesus, the Spirit of God acted as a seal, namely, as God's testimony that He was His Son, as an encouragement to His own heart, as an evidence to others, as a witness to the world and as a help to perseverance, even to the end. The same benefits will the sealing of the Spirit confer upon us—"in Christ Jesus after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

III. Thirdly, let us consider THE SEALING ITSELF. A great deal has been said on this point which has tended to foster superstition. Some have supposed that there is a separate act of the Spirit of God in which He seals Believers. It may be so, I will not raise the question. But I should be very sorry if any man here, living in sin, should, nevertheless, look back upon some time of religious excitement or enjoyment and say, "I am safe, for on that occasion I was sealed." And I should be very sorry to have any Brother or Sister take as the sure reason why they are saved, some remarkable experience which they underwent on a certain day, long past.

A seal is for the present and is not a mere memory, but an object palpable now and before the eyes. I am afraid many have been deceived into carelessness by the notion of a sealing received long ago. Let us seek out the Truth of God. According to the text, as far as I can read it, here is a man who has believed in Jesus and he desires a seal that God loves him. God gives him the Spirit and that is all the seal he can wish for or expect. Nothing more is needed, nothing else would be as good. The very fact that the Spirit of God works in you to will and to do according to God's good pleasure, is your seal! You do not require anything beyond. I do not say that any one operation of the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as the seal, but the whole of them together, as they prove His being within us, make up that seal. It is better, however, to keep to the doctrine that the Spirit of God in the Believer is, Himself, the seal—

"You are the earnest of His love, The pledge of joys to come, And Your soft wings, celestial Dove, Will safely convey me Home."

Now, let us look at what the context tells us about this. If you read on, the Apostle tells us that wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God are part of the seal. Kindly turn to the chapter and follow out the Apostle's line of argument. He says, (verse 15), "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith, etc., cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." See, then, if you have believed in Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God comes upon you and He gives you wisdom and revelation.

Doctrines in the Word which you never understood before become clear to you—"the eyes of your understanding being enlightened." The blessings promised are more distinctly discerned and you see, "the hope of your calling, and the riches of the glory of the Lord's inheritance in the saints." The deeper Truths of God, which at first quite staggered and puzzled you, gradually open up to you and you see and appreciate them. More especially, you discover the Glory of

Christ and see the exceeding greatness of the power with which the Lord works in the saints, "according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far

above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." You drink deep into the blessed thought that Jesus is the Head over all things to His Church and you obtain some glimpses into the mysterious doctrine that the Church is His fullness, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, if we know these things aright, the Spirit has taught us, and the consequence of it is that we say to ourselves, "Certainly I must be a child of God, for I never understood the things of God before." How could I have learned them if I had not been taught of God. The Master seems to stand by our side and say, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in Heaven." If you have been made to see the abounding Grace of God, the grandeur of the plan of salvation and the choice beauties of the blessed Person of Jesus Christ, you have a sure seal upon your soul, for like the blind man in the Gospels you can say, "One thing I know, whereas I was blind now I see."

Following on to the next chapter you will see that the Spirit of God works in every man who possesses in him life, and that life becomes another form of the seal. "You has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin." That life is of a new kind and has a renewing power so that men reject the course of this world and no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind. This new life they trace to God who is rich in mercy, who in His great love with which He loved them, even when they were dead in sins, has quickened them together with Christ. They trace this life entirely to the Grace of God—"By Grace are you saved"—and they see that this life produces in them good works, "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

I need not explain how this life lifts us up to sit in the heavenlies with Christ, for most of you know all about it. You have received a life from above, a living and incorruptible Seed is in you. You have passed into a new world. You have feelings, desires, fears, hopes such as you never knew before—and thus your outward life is also changed—so that you follow after that which is according to the will of God. Now, Brethren, what can be a better seal to you that you are, indeed, saved, than this life which you feel within? This is the way in which the Spirit of God seals you—by making you partakers of the Divine life which never has resided in the unbeliever yet—and never can dwell in anyone apart from faith. To "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name." "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." So that wisdom and life, which are both sure results of the indwelling of the Spirit of God, are a seal to us that we are really saved.

Go on a little further and you will notice upon the one seal a further mark, namely—fellowship. "You were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in

the world: but now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Those who have believed in Jesus Christ are led by the Spirit of God to love their fellow Christians and thus, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Once we thought the godly a dull and melancholy set—at any rate we let them go their own way—and we were glad to keep aloof from them! But now we delight in their society, sympathize with their pursuits and are willing to share their persecutions.

We count the saints of God the best company in the world. We would sooner sit down and talk half an hour with a poor, bed-ridden Christian woman, than be found in the courts of princes. This brotherly love becomes a seal of Grace within our hearts, for John tells us in his First Epistle, "Everyone that loves is born of God, and knows God." "If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:7, 12). Even more striking is that which follows, namely, that we have fellowship with God. The Apostle speaks of us as reconciled unto God by the Cross, by which the enmity is slain, and he says of our Lord, "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." I am following the course of the chapter.

When you and I feel that we commune with God, that there is no quarrel between Him and us, that He is loved of us as we are loved of Him. When we feel that we can draw near to Him in prayer and speak to Him, that He hears us and deigns to grant us gracious answers of peace, these are blessed seals of salvation. Some of us can look back on times of

fellowship with God, on seasons of prevailing prayer with Him and upon countless answers to our petitions. All these become to us Infallible tokens of Divine love!

I shall not tire you if I bid you notice, for one moment, that the Apostle puts in next building up—"And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord." Are you not conscious, Believers, that you are being built up unto a divinely glorious form, after a high and noble model? It does not yet appear what we shall be, but you must be conscious that course upon course of precious stones have been built upon the foundation of your faith in Christ. Since you have known the Lord you have made a distinct advance. At times you are afraid you have only grown downwards, but you have grown! There is a something about you, now, which was not there 10 years ago.

I am distinctly conscious, somehow, that 20 years ago I was not what I now am. I sometimes feel like a bird in the eggshell! I am chipping it away bit by bit. I believe it will break, one of these days, and the bird will come out. But I often feel my wings fretted and cramped by the shell. I want the life in me to be developed and set free! Do you never feel the same? Have you not felt as if you, yourself, were big with a far more glorious nature and

longed for deliverance from flesh and frailty? These groans, aspirations, hopes and desires are all seals of salvation!

You will never find the ungodly thus moved. These pangs are peculiar to life. You are not a finished structure, but a house in process of erection and you may be sure that one of these days the top stone shall be brought forth with shouts of, "Grace, Grace unto it." This building up through the Spirit of God is the seal of the Spirit. It is to you the evidence that God has begun a good work in you and is carrying it on. Last of all, the second Chapter of Ephesians finishes up by saying, "In whom you, also, are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." And this seems to me to gather up all that I have said before. The indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in the whole of them united and in each one in particular, is a choice seal—

"Do You not dwell in all the saints, And seal them heirs of Hea ven?" Yes, that is the manner of the sealing, according to the prayer of our hymn—

"Jesus, my Lord, reveal In charms of Grace Divine, And be Yourself the sacred seal,
That pearl of price is mine."

If you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, you must be the Lord's! Will the Spirit of God dwell in any temple but that which God has consecrated? He may come upon men to strive with them for awhile, but He will never dwell in any heart that has not been cleansed with the blood of Jesus, nor can He possibly reside permanently in any soul which is defiled with self-righteousness and love of sin. No, Beloved, if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you need no dreams, nor angels' whispers, nor noises in the air. The indwelling Spirit is the only seal you need! I put it to you, Brothers and Sisters, what more do you need? What more could God give you?

Suppose you were to meet on the road home, standing on the snow, an angel clothed in glittering white, and that he should say to you, "I have a message from God to you"? What if he should then mention your name and add, "You are one of God's chosen." That vision would comfort you for half-an- hour, I have no doubt, but many desponding spirits would not be comforted much longer, for Satan would say, "It was snowing, right? No doubt the flakes blew into your eyes or else you simply have a fine imagination." "Oh, but," you would say, "I heard him speak!" "Ah, you had noises in your head. You are becoming a fair subject for Bedlam Asylum!"

I confess if you were to tell me the story, I should not make any bones about it, but should say, "You are not such a fool as to believe that, are you?" And you would find many other people of the same mind. Now there can be no doubt about the seal of the text. You have been taught of God what no one but the Spirit of God could have taught you. You have a life in you which no one but the Spirit could have given you—of that knowledge and that life you are perfectly conscious—you do not need to ask anybody else about them. A man may ask me whether I know So-and-So—I am the best witness whether I do or not. If I am

asked, "How do you know you are alive?" Well, I walk about, that is all, and I am quite sure about it—I do not need any further evidence.

The best seal to a man's heart must be that of which he is conscious and about which he needs not appeal to others. Give me a seal that is as sure as my own existence! I fail to see how God Himself can give me anything more sure than the

gift of His Spirit working knowledge and life in me. "Oh," says one, "but if I could hear a voice." Suppose you did? Then the argument of fear would be that there are countless voices and one may be mistaken for another. You were in the street when you heard it. Perhaps it was a parrot or a starling in the upper window. Who knows? It is so easy for the ears to be deceived. Many a time you have said, "I know I heard So-and-So," when you did not hear him, but someone like him.

I would not believe my own ears, if their evidence had to do with my soul, one half so readily as I would believe my own consciousness. Since knowledge and life and other things I have mentioned just now are all matters of consciousness, they are much better seals than anything could be which appealed like an angelic vision to the eyes, or like a mysterious voice to the ears! Here you have something sure and steadfast. If the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are His, but if He dwells not in you, you are none of His.

Take this for the closing word—"Grieve not the Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption"—but love Him, honor Him and obey Him. So will the seal always be bright before your eyes. As to you who have not believed, I conclude with this—Do not ask for seals! You have nothing to do with seals, but with Jeans. "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign." Believe in Christ Jesus, and when you have trusted Him, then shall there come signs, seals, marks! God bless you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Ephesians 1. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—168, 458, 728.